

HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

VOL. X, No. 6]

AHMEDABAD—SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 1946

[TWO ANNAS

HIGH-HANDEDNESS EXPOSED

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The Bombay High Court has just delivered an illuminating judgment, allowing two habeas corpus applications of H. K. Shah and B. E. Sathe against detention orders extended from time to time. Chief Justice Stone and Justice Lokur have delivered a considered judgment setting at liberty the two applicants who were evidently illegally detained and might have remained under detention but for the fact that Advocate Purushottam Trikumdas assisted them to bring their cases before the Bombay High Court. I have just time to give below the few important extracts from the judgment.

After observing that the two affidavits filed by Mr. Simms, Home Secretary, Government of Bombay in relation to the two accused cannot be distinguished from each other except for the numbers at the tops, the learned judges go on to say: "In the case of Mr. Sathe, there is no suggestion in the reasons given that he assisted or supported any underground organization or organized anything underground, though it is suggested that, he assisted the activities of an organization, the object of which was to commit acts of sabotage, and even if it is to be presumed that such an organization would work underground, the very fact that these two affidavits of Mr. Simms are in identical terms, though they deal with the circumstances of two different cases, demonstrates a very casual approach to the grave responsibilities and duties, which devolve on every government servant charged with these wide powers of detention without trial.

"In Gokhale's case a full bench of this High Court had occasion to comment upon detention orders being made on cyclostiled forms inappropriate to the facts of the particular case and it now appears that unless checked, the era of the cyclostiled affidavits is about to dawn. Even passing over such irregular features in Mr. Simms' affidavits as referring to an affidavit without stating whose affidavit it is he refers to, his affidavit does not even state that all the circumstances of the petitioner's case were fully considered before the extension orders of the 7th January, 1946, were made."

Commenting upon the further affidavit of Mr. Simms which he filed after declining to attend the court in order to submit himself to cross-examination the judges observe: "That is a very remarkable document for any one to file who has been given an opportunity by the court to attend the court in order to give *viva voce* evidence. It is even more remarkable by its omission than by what it says, for it leaves unchallenged the affidavits for the 22nd February of the two petitioners filed in answer to Mr. Simms' two

affidavits which are in identical terms, and which the last affidavit seeks to amend." Referring to the extension orders, the learned judges go on to observe, "But once the original order has run its course, the legislature has provided certain safeguards for the protection of the persons detained. Before the six months expired, the person detained will have received the notice giving him the grounds for his detention, and he may have a representation under section 7. The extension order itself has to be made within thirty days immediately preceding the expiry of the previous order, and lastly, there is added to subjective satisfaction an objective test that the detaining authority shall have further considered all the circumstances of the case. In our opinion emphasis is to be placed on the word 'all' and the question at once arises what is the nature of all the circumstances which have to be considered. That must be a question of law."

Holding that the defence plea that the detaining authority had not considered all the circumstances of the case the judges observe:

"Mr. Purushottam Trikumdas advanced various heads of circumstances which he submits it is obligatory for the detaining authority to consider. In our opinion it is clear that such circumstances must include:

(1) A consideration of the matters and things which the detenu did or was suspected of doing when the original order was made.

(2) These matters and things must be considered in conjunction with and in the high light of the present state of affairs. That is to say, the state of affairs existing in India at the date when the proposed extension order is to be made.

(3) A consideration of any representation which the person detained may have made under section 7(4) had consideration of the person detained since his detention and the present state of his health.

"Turning again to the circumstances of the two cases before us, having given the whole position our careful consideration we are not prepared to accept the affidavits of Mr. Simms filed on either of these petitions as affording any reliable answer to the assertion of the petitioners that all the circumstances of their cases have not been considered in the light of the state of affairs current in India on the 7th January, 1946. On that date as the petitioners point out there was no successful prosecution of a war for the mass movement to hinder and the various committees of the Congress previously unlawful, had been legalized and the members of the Working Committee of the Congress Party and its leader had been released from detention. These are all circumstances which already ought to have been considered before

the renewal orders of the 7th January, 1946 were made."

The judges then draw attention to the fact that Mr. Simms did not state that H. E. the Governor had considered the papers and agreed to the extension orders of 7-1-46 being made. The judges say: "It is extremely significant that His Excellency did not consider and agree to the making of these extension orders though he had considered and agreed to the making of all the orders in both the cases in 1944 and 1945. If he had done so when the orders of the 7th January, 1946 were made, it is inconceivable that Mr. Simms should not have stated that most important fact, which is bound to inspire confidence that any order which has been so considered and agreed to has been made after due care, attention and consideration." Therefore they hold that the two petitioners have "successfully challenged the two extension orders of the 7th of January as not being validly made, because, having regard to the facts stated by the petitioners it is impossible to come to the conclusion that the detaining authority complied with the objective test of having considered all the circumstances of the petitioners' cases. . . . That being so it is our clear duty to order their immediate release."

In my opinion the released men are entitled to damages for illegal detention. This, however, may be debatable. But there can be no doubt that all persons similarly detained, no matter in which province, should immediately be discharged without a doubt. There is no danger of the government being overturned by reason of the discharges.

Bombay, 13-3-46

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK AND SAMAGRA GRAMASEVA

On the 29th of January Gandhiji was asked a few questions in the Constructive Workers' Conference at Madras. Two of those questions and their answers are given below:

Q. Can a worker who has taken up one item of constructive work dabble in others? Is it right for him to do so? If so how?

A. Constructive programme as it stands today is comprised of 18 items. The spinning wheel as the symbol of non-violence occupies the central place. So every worker must spin and know all about spinning. Supposing a worker takes up paper making as his main occupation and has to find his livelihood also through it, he won't have much time left for other things. But he will be able to render some other service to the villagers besides that which he renders through the spinning wheel and paper making. For instance, he can work for improving the sanitation of the place and render advice about the care of the sick when he cannot take up full responsibility for nursing them.

Supposing another worker decides to concentrate on the spinning wheel only and to find his livelihood also through that, he can do so. I have no doubt in my mind that the wheel can serve as the instrument of earning one's livelihood and at the same time enable the worker to render useful service to his neighbours. The thing is that every worker

should decide for himself what will be his main activity besides the spinning wheel and what will be his subsidiary activities. Whatever he does, he should do intelligently and with knowledge. Thus, in order to ply the wheel intelligently, he should know all the processes that precede and succeed spinning. He should have full knowledge of the activities that he wishes to concentrate upon and have a general working knowledge about other items of the constructive programme. A student of astronomy cannot know astronomy without some knowledge of science in general. Similarly a worker cannot afford to be utterly ignorant about other items of constructive work.

Q. Please explain the meaning of Samagra Gramaseva of your conception. How can we fit ourselves for that?

A. The 18-fold Constructive Programme includes Samagra Gramaseva. A Samagra Gramasevak must know everybody living in the village and render them such service as he can. That does not mean that the worker will be able to do everything single-handed. He will show them the way of helping themselves and procure for them such help and materials as they require. He will train up his own helpers. He will so win over the villagers that they will seek and follow his advice. Supposing I go and settle down in a village with a *ghani* (village oil press), I won't be an ordinary *ghanchi* (oil presser) earning 15-20 rupees a month. I will be a Mahatma *ghanchi*. I have used the word 'Mahatma' in fun but what I mean to say is that as a *ghanchi* I will become a model for the villagers to follow. I will be a *ghanchi* who knows the Gita and the Quran. I will be learned enough to teach their children. I may not be able to do so for lack of time. The villagers will come to me and ask me: "Please make arrangements for our children's education." I will tell them: "I can find you a teacher but you will have to bear the expenses." And they will be prepared to do so most willingly. I will teach them spinning and when they come and ask me for the services of a weaver, I will find them a weaver on the same terms as I found them a teacher. And the weaver will teach them how to weave their own cloth. I will inculcate in them the importance of hygiene and sanitation and when they come and ask me for a sweeper I will tell them: "I will be your sweeper and I will train you all in the job." This is my conception of Samagra Gramaseva. You may tell me that I will never find a *ghanchi* of this description in this age. Then I will say that we cannot hope to improve our villages in this age. Take the example of a *ghanchi* in Russia. After all the man who runs an oil mill is a *ghanchi*. He has money but his strength does not lie in his money. Real strength lies in knowledge. True knowledge gives a moral standing and moral strength. Everyone seeks the advice of such a man. Take the instance of Vinoba. He is a good *ghanchi*. You all know what he does and you can all follow his example according to your capacity.

(From *Harijansevak*)

S. N.

GANDHIJI'S PRESS STATEMENTS

I

The following letter from Gandhiji to the P. S. V. of 21-2-'46 and the latter's reply dated 29-2-'46 are released to the press by Gandhiji with the consent of His Excellency the Viceroy.

"Here are a few more suggestions to meet the food situation which have been sent me by friends.

"The Indian Army should be given this unique opportunity of doing constructive work. They can be moved about easily. They could therefore be sent to all such places where wells need to be dug most urgently.

"Regarding additional foods, fish has been mentioned. Fish abounds in the seas around the coast of India. The war is over; there are innumerable small and medium-sized vessels which were used for doing patrol and guard duties along our shores for the last five years. The R. I. N. could arrange about staffing these, with the Department of Fisheries giving all assistance. If everything and anything can be done during a war — why not a peace time war effort? Dry fish does even now form part of the normal diet of a great number of people who are very poor — that is when it is available and they can afford to buy it.

"All public gardens should immediately by law be made to start growing vegetables. Squads of army personnel should be put to work here too. People requiring extra labour to transform their ground or garden should also be able to obtain free help through this channel.

"The distribution of food should be through Co-operative Societies or similar organizations.

"All food parcels to friends or relatives in Britain or elsewhere abroad should be stopped as also the export of ground-nuts, oils, oil cakes, etc..

"All stocks or food-stuffs in the hands of the military should be released forthwith and no distinction should be made between military and civil ranks. In this connection I draw His Excellency's attention to the following A. P. I. message published in the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 11-2-'46.

Dacca, Feb. 8

It is learnt that huge quantities of decomposed *atta* are being destroyed for the last few days by throwing them into the river Shitalaksha at Narayanganj.

"The campaign against despondency and for growing more food will avail nothing, unless bribery which is going on as never before is stopped and honesty and straight dealing begin to pervade the Government ranks and the Public."

* * *

"Thank you for your letter of the 21st February making suggestions to meet the food situation. His Excellency, to whom I have shown your letter, is grateful to you for writing, and will have the various proposals examined where this has not been done already.

"2. Only a day or two ago His Excellency suggested to the Commander-in-Chief that it might be possible for the R.I.N. to assist with fishing. Recent events may make this difficult, but meanwhile His Excellency has initiated enquiries about the possibility of importing

dried fish from Canada and Newfoundland, and also about the securing of suitable vessels and equipment so as to make a start with developing on modern lines the fisheries industry. Already the Army is doing a good deal in the Grow More Food campaign and is releasing machinery for digging wells, levelling ground, etc..

"3. In Delhi a considerable part of the Central Vista is to be ploughed up and the gardens of bungalows are to be used for growing vegetables on a larger scale. The sending of food parcels to friends or relatives outside India has been ordered to be stopped and an urgent examination is being undertaken of the question of exporting groundnuts, oil cakes, etc..

"4. Bribery and corruption is admitted to be one of the worst enemies of efficient food administration. This is also one of the most difficult to defeat. The detailed implementing of the controls is mainly in the hands of Provincial Governments, and perhaps the new Ministries may be able to achieve results in this direction."

Poona, 6-3-'46

II

Letters and wires continue to come to me seeking my aid in saving General Avari's life which seems now to be sinking. I know Gen. Avari. He is a lovable worker. But I know too that he is often improperly obstinate. The present occasion is a case in point. If a man however popular and great he may be, takes up an improper cause and fasts in defence of the impropriety, it is the duty of his friends (among whom I count myself), fellow workers and relatives to let him die rather than that an improper cause should triumph so that he may live. Fairest means cease to be fair when the end sought is unfair. Let me say once more where Gen. Avari's end is improper and unfair. He may be wholly right in his statement that a great wrong has been perpetrated by the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress. But who can right the wrong? Not Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as Gen. Avari tells me he can. He is but an individual, Sardar though he is. He has pronounced the decision of the Board. A judge cannot review his own judgment. The Sardar is out of the picture. The Central Board cannot, must not, review its own judgment. It has no authority. No institution can act capriciously in a well managed democracy. Gen. Avari and his friends have the right of appeal or review by the Working Committee, then the A. I. C. C., finally the Congress. This procedure may appear to him too long. It is not, unless he is fighting for an individual or individuals and not for a principle as he assures me he is doing. Time always runs in favour of the defence of a principle. If the general session of the Congress which is the highest tribunal for vindicating justice decides against Gen. Avari, he has to submit to its verdict. The Congress is the *Panchayat*. Like the king it can do no wrong. This is merely a necessary and legitimate conception for guidance in the observance of an infallible duty. In truth, however, decisions of human organizations in all climes have been sometimes found to be wrong. So it may be in the case under discussion. Then, but not till then, will Gen. Avari have in theory the right, if he chooses to exercise it, to stir public conscience into action by a fast to the finish. In

practice, it will be ludicrous. For the principle behind such action can only euphemistically be so called. In democracy even pure men may unconsciously give wrong decisions. The remedy is more and purer education, greater awakening of the public and in such quickened atmosphere the rise of a number of public workers whose sole duty will be to speak, write and act so as to serve as bright examples for the public.

Now I hope the friends of Gen. Avari will understand me when I say that those who wrongly support him and his fast and thus encourage him will hasten Gen. Avari's death, not those who will not swerve from well-recognized canons of justice even for the sake of saving the life of an erring friend. Let justice triumph through the heavens weep.

Poona, 7-3-'46

HARIJAN

March 17

1946

MY CONFESSION AND CURE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

It is plain to me as it has become to some of my friends that I am incorrigible. I can learn only by my mistakes. I have just discovered myself making a mistake which I should never have made.

I have known Dr. Dinshah Mehta for a long time. He has dedicated his life solely to nature cure of his conception. His one ambition is to see a full-fledged nature cure university established in India. A university worth the name must be predominantly for the prevention and cure of the diseases of the poor villagers of India. No such university exists in the world. The Institutes in the West are designed more for the rich than the poor.

I feel that I know the method of nature cure for the villagers of India. Therefore I should at once have known that nature cure for the villagers could not be attempted in Poona city. But a Trust was made. Very sober Jehangirji Patel permitted himself to be a co-trustee with Dr. Mehta and me and I hastened to Poona to run for the poor, Dr. Mehta's erstwhile clinic which was designed for the rich. I suggested some drastic changes but last Monday the knowledge dawned upon me that I was a fool to think that I could ever hope to make an institute for the poor in a town. I realized that if I cared for the ailing poor I must go to them and not expect them to come to me. This is true of ordinary medicinal treatment. It is much more so of nature cure. How is a villager coming to Poona to understand and carry out my instructions to apply mud poultices, take sun cure, hip and friction sitz baths or certain foods cooked conservatively? He would expect me to give him a powder or a potion to swallow and be done with it. Nature cure connotes a way of life which has to be learnt; it is not a drug cure as we understand it. The treatment to be efficacious can, therefore, only take place in or near a man's cottage or

house. It demands from its physician sympathy and patience and knowledge of human nature. When he has successfully practised in this manner in a village, or villages, when enough men and women have understood the secret of nature cure, a nucleus for a nature cure university is founded. It should not have required eleven days' special stay in the Institute to discover this simple truth that I did not need a huge building and all its attendant paraphernalia for my purpose. I do not know whether to laugh or weep over my folly. I laughed at it and made haste to undo the blunder. This confession completes the reparation.

I should like the reader to draw the moral that he should never take anything for gospel truth even if it comes from a *Mahatma* unless it appeals to both his head and heart. In the present case my folly is so patent that even if it had continued for some time very few, if any would have succumbed to it. The real villagers would not have come for relief to this Institute. But if the discovery had come too late it would have blasted my reputation for I would have lost in my own estimation. Nothing hurts a man more than the loss of self-respect. I do not know that now I deserve the confidence of my fellowmen. If I lose it I know that I shall have deserved the loss. To complete the story I must tell the reader that not a pice of the money earmarked for the poor ailing villagers has been spent on this abortive enterprise. What shape the present Institute will now take and where and how poor men's nature cure will be tried is no part of this confession. The result of the initial mistake must not, however, be an abandonment of the new pursuit that I have taken up in the so-called evening of my life. It must, on the contrary, be a clearer and more vigorous pursuit of the ideal of nature cure for the millions if such a thing is at all practicable. Possible it certainly is.

Poona, 6-3-'46

To Patients

Letters are being received in large numbers from patients wanting to be admitted to the Nature Cure Clinic at Poona. Let me inform them that no such facility exists at present. The standard of cleanliness that was intended to be introduced into the institution has not been reached. Work for the village people has not yet been started. So long as the preliminary adaptations are not complete nothing can be done. The patients have therefore to wait. Dr. Dinsha Mehta's Nature Cure Clinic at Bombay is no doubt there. He may open branches at Poona and Sinbagad also. But since he has undertaken heavy responsibility in connection with the Nature Cure Trust all this may take time. For private patients the scale of his fees will continue as before.

Bombay, 12-3-'46

M. K. G.

NOTICE

Intimation of a change of address to be effective for the week should be received by *Thursday*. The subscriber number should always be given.

MANAGER

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. How can a person in the military do constructive work?

A. A military man who has any grit in him can take up spinning together with the anterior and posterior processes. He can go in for paper making or any other village craft during his leisure hours. Army men have plenty of leisure when they are not fighting. Even when there is fighting all are not engaged in it though they have to stand by ready. Thus they can learn all those activities which are being conducted for the freedom of India. They should learn the national language in the two scripts. All this study must be coupled with a burning love of freedom and the courage to stand true to one's conviction and to act accordingly even if one is left alone. In no way does this conflict with military discipline. I do not believe in indulging in indiscipline especially in military service. Nor is there any room in my scheme of things for secret activity. Adherence to these principles is the only correct course for an individual or a people.

Q. It is supposed to be a sign of ill breeding not to leave some food on one's plate after finishing a meal. The contrary is supposed to be the correct thing to do.

A. It passes my comprehension how such action can be tolerated, especially in the face of the threatened famine. I do not know the reason for this practice and it would be waste of time to enquire into it. I consider it to be a sign of vulgarity and lack of perspective to have more on one's plate than one requires. In the present time no one is really entitled to full meals. Waste would be a sign of callousness. On the other hand, I consider it good breeding and discrimination to leave one's plate clean of leavings. It saves too the time of those who wash up. It is thoughtful and correct before beginning a meal to remove what one considers excess from one's plate on to a clean plate. Hosts should be discriminating and have enough delicate regard to find out what their guests require in the way of food and then give them no more than what they want.

Q. Writing letters in blood and using blood for auspicious marks is becoming almost a fashion. Ought it not to be stopped?

A. To my mind this is a revolting practice. It causes no hurt to take a little blood from oneself. In these days in particular, blood letting can be performed without the slightest pain or inconvenience. If too much is taken from him the donor experiences weakness. But to write or sign letters in one's own blood is neither bravery nor does it connote any sacrifice or suffering. It is nothing more or less than criminal folly and ought to be abjured. Not only that. It is a duty to stop it. The easiest way is for all leaders not to countenance such a vulgar and uncivilized practice.

Poona, 6-3-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

SATYAGRAHA IN FACE OF
HOOLIGANISM

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A friend has gently posed the question as to what a Satyagrahi should do to prevent looting by *goondas*. If he had understood the secret of Satyagraha he would not have put it.

To lay down one's life, even alone, for what one considers to be right, is the very core of Satyagraha. More, no man can do. If a man is armed with a sword he might lop off a few heads but ultimately he must surrender to superior force or else die fighting. The sword of the Satyagrahi is love and the unshakable firmness that comes from it. He will regard as brothers the hundreds of *goondas* that confront him and instead of trying to kill them he will choose to die at their hands and thereby live.

This is straight and simple. But how can a solitary Satyagrahi succeed in the midst of a huge population? Hundreds of hooligans were let loose on the city of Bombay for arson and loot. A solitary Satyagrahi will be like a drop in the ocean. Thus argues the correspondent.

My reply is that a Satyagrahi may never run away from danger, irrespective of whether he is alone or in the company of many. He will have fully performed his duty if he dies fighting. The same holds good in armed warfare. It applies with greater force in Satyagraha. Moreover, the sacrifice of one will evoke the sacrifice of many and may possibly produce big results. There is always this possibility. But one must scrupulously avoid the temptation of a desire for results.

I believe that every man and woman should learn the art of self-defence in this age. This is done through arms in the West. Every adult man is conscripted for army training for a definite period. The training for Satyagraha is meant for all, irrespective of age or sex. The more important part of the training here is mental, not physical. There can be no compulsion in mental training. The surrounding atmosphere no doubt acts on the mind but that cannot justify compulsion.

It follows that shopkeepers, traders, mill-hands, labourers, farmers, clerks, in short, everyone ought to consider it his or her duty to get the necessary training in Satyagraha.

Satyagraha is always superior to armed resistance. This can only be effectively proved by demonstration, not by argument. It is the weapon that adorns the strong. It can never adorn the weak. By weak is meant the weak in mind and spirit, not in body. That limitation is a quality to be prized and not a defect to be deplored.

One ought also to understand one of its other limitations. It can never be used to defend a wrong cause.

Satyagraha brigades can be organized in every village and in every block of buildings in the cities. Each brigade should be composed of those persons who are well-known to the organizers. In this respect Satyagraha differs from armed defence. For

the latter the State impresses the service of everybody. For a Satyagraha brigade only those are eligible who believe in *ahimsa* and *satya*. Therefore, an intimate knowledge of the persons enlisted is necessary for the organizers.

Poona, 6-3-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR COMBATING FOOD SCARCITY

1. A friend from the South writes that the policy of the Madras Government is beneficial to neither producer nor consumer for the reason that middlemen take enormous profits at the cost of both. The District Collector appoints wholesale dealers who in turn appoint their own agents. For example, an agent purchases paddy at X village at Rs. 5-9-10 per maund of 32 Madras measures. This is taken to the wholesale dealer's godown four miles away. The same paddy is then returned to where it was produced and sold at Rs. 0-3-5 per Madras measure. The difference between cost and sale prices per maund is Rs. 1-3-6, 21.7% above cost price. All this after deducting cost of transport goes into the middleman's pocket. This difference also contributes to hoarding and the creation of a black market. The ryot can easily sell at a price lower than the retail sale price and still get more than what the agent gives him. The consumer too could purchase cheaper from the ryot than from the ration shop.

Of course when the paddy purchased is sold as *rice* the middleman's profit is still higher. Why, in any event, should not the consumer have paddy which he can himself easily convert into rice by hand-pounding? Apart from physical and material gain this would also afford bran for his cattle. The friend therefore suggests the following remedies:

(a) Paddy to be stocked in godowns in the villages. After enough has been stocked for local needs the remainder may be sent direct to where it is needed.

(b) Ration to be distributed in the form of paddy.

(c) Paddy to be distributed at cost price. Cost of procurement and distribution to be subsidized by the Government.

(d) Ration to be doubled in the case of agricultural labourers or any labourers doing hard manual labour.

2. A friend from Bengal suggests that jute growing should be curtailed to meet local needs. It absorbs a great area of cultivable lands which should be used for staple foods.

3. Another friend writes that there is a great deal of grain stocked in some of the States. After meeting local needs they should be asked to co-operate with British India and send the surplus to needy places. A strict watch should be kept so that grain stuffs wherever stocked may not be lost by rotting nor used for profiteering.

4. Every help should be afforded to poor agriculturists in the matter of implements of agriculture. To improve these and supply them at cheap rates to farmers is the duty of the State.

5. A Punjab friend writes that price control, instead of helping the poor man is helping to raise prices and create a black market. He says that *gram* in the Punjab bazars today is selling at Rs. 18/- per maund and that too is available through dubious channels. If control were removed, the price would come down. There is plenty of wheat in the Punjab which is getting black and there is adulteration of flour which is hard to get even at Rs. 13/- or 14/- per maund.

6. Many persons write that every advantage should be taken of the coming mango crop which promises to be a bumper one. Mangoes have good nutritive value for human beings.

7. Oil cakes from ground-nut, rape and other seeds can be easily processed into a highly nutritious food for man. This food can be used for making bread and if mixed with an equal part of wheat *atta* can make *chapatis* also. If more kerosene oil is imported more seeds would be available for the poor to eat.

8. Since food is above politics and parties there should be a special Food Cabinet at the Centre with trusted representatives of the people. This would perhaps be a potent factor in helping to get rid of corruption.

9. The majority of well-to-do people eat too much. They should be educated to realize that health and strength are not dependent on the large amount one eats. In fact it is the other way round.

10. A plea for soya bean has also been made on the ground that it contains protein, fat and carbohydrate value. One part soya bean to three parts wheat gives standard nutrition. If it could be added to the daily wheat ration the latter could be reduced to 9 oz. The writer urges its immediate importation and encouragement for its growth here.

11. Famine conditions offer a golden opportunity for teaching villagers the value of co-operation in all departments of life. But the teaching must be imparted by those who really love the villagers and will become one with them and see that everything is done honestly.

12. A friend who knows writes:

"Regarding the food situation, I have been talking to some young army officers. They are keen and anxious to do all that they can. What they want is a short course in agriculture, and precise instructions as to what they have to do. It would be necessary to attach some agricultural experts with these engineer corps. They have got quite a good amount of equipment in the shape of tractors, jeeps and bull-dozers, but they must not be expected to produce ploughs. They must be provided with these materials. The army has to be directed by those who know their job. Unfortunately, however, the direction at the centre is exceedingly weak, and wholly without vision. It is good that the Viceroy has taken the matter in his hands, but the Executive which has to handle this vast problem has not yet been organized. The problem in terms of arithmetic is something as follows:

"Our total production of cereals is 60 million tons per annum, out of which 18 millions come in the market. The official estimate of the deficit is

6 million tons — or a third of the entire quantity of grain, which is marketed throughout a year—an enormous quantity to deal with in terms of transport alone. The problem is of an alarming magnitude, if it is considered that the principal areas requiring immediate help are South Bombay, and the entire Madras Presidency, including Mysore and Travancore. There is a possibility of getting 3 to 4 million tons of grains from abroad, but it would be quite impossible to handle even a quarter of these imports at our ports on the West and South-East coasts. There is neither storage nor facilities for handling the traffic at the ports, or on the rail-road. There is a very considerable danger of people starving, and grain rotting at the ports, or lying unloaded in the ships, simply because the problem has not been worked out in detail. A fully loaded goods train means only 50 wagons, and a train load of 1,000 tons at a time. The time for loading such a goods train is anything upto 3 to 5 days, *if the necessary siding and labour are available*. Add to this the time required for unloading and transit between two points, and you get the measure of the time lag. If we receive three million tons of imports, it would mean 3,000 special goods trains; at least half of them during the first 150 days, or 10 per day—quite an impossible feat even under the best of circumstances. How on earth we are going to manage this with the limiting factor of the Western ports, and the resources of the railway lines operating only in Southern India? We shall need very much more than what the available railway transport and road transport in the hands of the public as well as the army can do. Unfortunately, nobody either here or in the Central Government has even thought in these concrete terms. I sometimes fear that it is quite impossible to make the Government realize the magnitude of the danger that threatens this country not only this year, but the year after, for the immediate quantity that we want for our existing population is 7 million tons of more production, and 14 millions in 1953 for a population of 45 crores. We cannot, therefore, live on the prospects of charity from abroad, even if it materializes regularly in future.

"The only sovereign remedy is, as Gandhiji has said, self-help, which must be translated into concrete measures to step up our production and to increase the mobility in transit and the effectiveness of storage. The waste, as a result of faulty storing and insect disease, which runs into a very big total, could and should be largely eliminated. The trouble, however, is that the services have got into a rut, and even the Viceroy trying to stir it up cannot succeed, unless the details of the organization are worked out with the completest co-operation between the official machinery and the public organizations. I do hope therefore, that the change at the centre will take place soon, at any rate, in food, for otherwise we are in again for very bad times indeed. The help from abroad might expose our utter inefficiency, unless the executive responsible for working out the plans wakes up in time, and of this there is no sign whatever."

Poona, 10-3-46

A.K.

TWO REMARKABLE EXPERIMENTS

The question sometimes arises in planning a programme of social uplift as to what should be considered primary and given priority. Dr. G. T. Wrench, M. D., in his book *The Wheel of Health* describes some remarkable experiments which furnish an indictment of building new and sanitary houses and of organizing physical drill as prior to food in a policy of health. The first experiment was conducted in Stockton-on-Tees.

Stockton-on-Tees is an ancient market town. Its population in 1931 was 67,722. Of the population 40 per cent of the males between fourteen and sixty-five were unemployed. Some seven or eight years back, the Stockton Town Council launched a vigorous slum clearing programme. A vigorous policy of better housing was launched. That gave Dr. G. C. M. Gonigle, Medical Officer of Health of Stockton-on-Tees, an opportunity to conduct a unique series of statistical observations proving conclusively the vital primary claim of food.

As a result of a survey of housing newly taken in 1919, the largest section of the town scheduled as an 'unhealthy area' was dubbed as 'Number 1 area'. It was decided to demolish part of Number 1 and transfer its inhabitants to a 'new up-to-date municipal estate, agreeably named Mount Pleasant'. In 1927, 152 families comprising 710 individuals were transferred to Mount Pleasant, leaving behind in Number 1 area 289 families with a total of 1,298 individuals.

Here was as striking a contrast between two sets of conditions as one could imagine between conditions new and old, of good housing and slum. "Naturally everyone thought the transfer to Mount Pleasant would result in a betterment." But an amazing thing happened. It was found that "the health of the inhabitants of Mount Pleasant instead of improving or at least remaining stationary actually began to deteriorate, whereas that of the families and people left behind in the slums did not". The standardized death rate of the first five years following upon the transfer was 33 per 1,000; that of the unchanged slum 22 per 1,000. The rate for Mount Pleasant Estate was 33.55 per 1,000. This was the more surprising in view of the fact that "it represented an increase of 46 per cent over the mean standardized rates for the same individuals in the previous quinquennium". It was "a real increase and beyond the probable extent of fortuitous variation."

What was the explanation? Better housing? "Had something better proved something worse?" It sounded absurd. Dr. G. C. M. Gonigle solved the riddle. From a comparative analysis of the family budgets before and after the change he showed that in the slums the people had rents which averaged 4 sh. 8 d. a week per family. In 1928 on the Mount Pleasant Estate the rent was 9 sh. a week and by 1932 it had risen to 9 sh. 3½ d. per week or double the original rate. Consequently less was spent on food. Particularly, it was found in the case of unemployed of both areas that the food per man per week in the Mount Pleasant Estate cost 34.7 pence, that in the unchanged slum 45.6 pence. The conclusion was that "in making housing and sanitation better first money was withdrawn from the individual's primary need—food". The deterioration of food led to the deterioration of health in spite of the compensating

factors in the form of better housing and sanitation in the second case.

The second experiment is similar. It is of particular importance to those who are interested in the education of children. It shows how "food takes primary place to exercise and physical drill". It was reported by McCollum and Simmonds that fortytwo out of eightyfour negro children in a "kindly but impoverished institution", were as an experiment, given one quart of milk daily, in addition to the customary institutional food. Between these children and the children who were not given milk, there was not only a difference of growth and health "but of desire of exercise". The non-milk children were "apathetic and very tractable. . . . Those on the milk-fed group, on the other hand, soon caused annoyance to their teachers by their restlessness and activity." To this may be added the following from the League of Nations Report on the Problem of Nutrition, Volume I. "A pint of milk daily added to what was considered a good diet in an institutional boarding school was followed by the usual increased growth and decreased illness, and it was particularly noted that the children were more highly spirited and irrepressible."

Remarks Dr. Wrench commenting on this: "The irrepressible activity which good food provides is willingly poured out by the child or man into the many channels that are ready for it. Whether it be as work or play, exercise or drill, sports or sheer necessity, the well-nourished body is glad of the opportunity of activity." To give drill and exercise priority would be to put the horse before the cart. Proper and adequate nourishment is the first step in the education of the child.

PYARELAL

PERSECUTION OF HARIJANS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri Parikshitlal Mazumdar writes:

"There was high mortality due to some epidemic in a village in Wadhwan State, Kathiawad. The superstition of the villagers ascribed this misfortune to Harijans and they began to intimidate the Bhangi families. The latter fled from the village through fright. Harijan workers, as soon as they learnt of the incident, approached the State authorities to take immediate steps to protect the Bhangis and did their level best to dispel the superstition from the minds of the ignorant villagers. The State acted promptly and the families returned. This year Kathiawad Harijans have had to suffer more than usual because of the outbreak of disease among cattle. These poor folk have to pay dearly for the superstition of the villagers."

The only remedy for this kind of superstition is the spread of correct knowledge. The reason for its existence in Kathiawad seems to be that the reform movement has not yet touched the villages there. Workers must make herculean efforts to remedy this defect. But wherefrom are such workers to come? Even those already working in Kathiawad fight shy of going to the villages. And even if they go, one can well imagine the immense difficulty of the task confronting them. Man's endeavour at its

highest consists in continuing to perform one's duty undeterred by difficulties. The Kathiawad incident must be taken to heart. Both the State and the people understood their duty and took prompt and firm measures in the instance quoted and the difficulty was surmounted for the time being. If this example were to be widely followed it would cut at the very root of superstition. And that would be true education.

Poona, 6-3-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

Hindu and Mussalman Tea etc.

Hindu and Mussalman tea is sold at railway stations. Separate arrangements for meals for the two communities are sometimes made and none seem to be there for Harijans. All this is a sign of our pitiable condition and constitutes a blot on British administration. One can understand their not interfering in religious matters but for them to allow separate arrangements for tea, water etc. for the two communities is to set the seal of approval on separatism. Railways and railway travelling offer a golden opportunity which could be used for social reform and for educating the public in sanitation and hygiene, good manners and communal unity. Instead, however, an utter neglect of and indifference to these desiderata are shown. Railway travel serves to strengthen rather than mitigate evil customs and bad habits. First and second class passengers are pampered, luxurious habits encouraged. Third class passengers on whom the railway revenues largely depend are denied even elementary amenities and exposed to all kinds of hardship. In either case weakness is exploited. And when, in addition to this, separatism and untouchability are recognized by the Railway authorities, it is the very limit. If any passenger wishes to impose restrictions on himself he is at liberty to do so at his own expense and suffer, may be, even hunger and thirst. But let him not demand special facilities for himself from Railway authorities.

That vegetarians and non-vegetarians should be catered for is another matter. That is already being done.

Poona, 7-3-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

M. K. G.

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